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Studies indicate that we should not be thinking of the dropout, but of different types of dropouts in need of different environments and aid at different times. Characteristics of the "high aspirers" and the "returnees" are given as specific examples. It is important for training programs to accept the needed diversity of teachers and to uncover and develop the basic strategies of the successful teacher types.

School systems generally have not developed the qualities of flexibility and adaptiveness necessary to deal with today's problems. Suggestions illustrating structural changes in schools are enumerated and discussed. Major emphasis should be placed upon encouraging new outlooks among school principals and superintendents. Changes at the administrative level encourage possibilities of change at the teacher level and engender positive action among the students.

The climate created by organizational style is crucial. The attitude conveyed by the teacher to the students greatly affects his success. Tactic, strategy and structure are important. The responsibility for solutions should not be placed on the student; a professional should assume responsibility for action needed to improve the situation.

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STRATEGY, STRUCTURE AND VALUES IN SCHOOL PROGRAMS

The growing disadvantages of dropouts in the labor market has brought them increased attention. The low-educated youth of today is relatively worse off than was his counterpart, even a generation ago. Obviously, the adaptation of schools to deal more effectively with dropouts---in both preventive and remedial activities---is only one mode of attack on the problem. Basic economic and social issues are involved in the attempts to deal adequately with the issues raised by early school leaving. In the following remarks, the perspective is narrowed, however, to the role of the school in reducing dropouts and we shall deal with selected aspects of the tactics, strategy, structure and values of the various action programs involving school change.

Two Neglected Groups

"High aspiring" dropouts have been neglected. Many low-income families, especially Negro, have very high educational and occupational aspirations for their children. Many low-income children report high aspirations. A number of studies of Negroes show their generally high aspirations,

their generally high regard for education and their high occupational aims. Nevertheless, many of them will be dropouts. Frequently they have been characterized as possessing "unrealistic" aspirations, regarded as rather silly or unknowing and no special attention has been paid to the "unrealistic high aspirer."

At the same time, many low-income groups have been charged with having little interest in education and low educational and occupational aspirations. "Unrealistic" high aspirations and low aspirations are lumped together into interpreting

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low-income attitudes. But individuals with extremely high aspirations are likely to be different in at least some ways from individuals with low aspirations, even if both groups have high dropout rates.

High aspirers are likely to have a more positive view of schools and education than low aspirers. The high rate of early school leaving among high aspirers is indicative of the school's failure to take hold of the special characteristics of this group. Special strategies are probably needed to be effective with high aspiring individuals of low-income backgrounds. This is not the place to suggest the strategies but to point out the nglect of an important group which apparently has some accessible potential for staying in school compared to groups which have low career aspirations and negative evaluations of education.

A second neglected group are the returnees--dropouts who go on to some form of further education after leaving school. Returnees may be as much as 25% of all dropouts.[1] A much more systematic way of reacting and responding to these dropouts is needed since they have great potential for the maintenance of their school careers if encouraged. Many more dropouts might return if more effort were directed to them.

Many students build up a momentum toward leaving school. Counseling, guidance, attention during this outwardly spiraling period tend to be ineffective--the youth is propelled along in the dropout direction and intervention is ineffective, exit interviews becoming formalities. After dropping out, however, it may be possible "to get to" these youth, encourage them to return to school and provide flexible school procedures which facilitate re-entry. Providing "aggressive",

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1. See Betty L. Saleem and S. M. Miller, "The Neglected Dropout: The Returnee", Syracuse University Youth Development Center, 1963.

"reaching out" counseling aid when the youth is in the labor market may be more important in many cases than its availability prior to leaving school.

The high aspirers and the returnees are only two types of dropouts. Available material on dropouts[2] indicates how varied they are; we should not be thinking of the dropout but of different types of dropouts, needing different environments and aid at various times. Obviously, then, various kinds and types of teachers are needed.

Pluralism in Teaching Perfection

Unfortunately, an implicit model of an ideal teacher frequently prevails. Teachers are expected to, or believe that they should, fashion themselves after the model. *The existence of many different kinds of successful teachers has been* inadequately recognized. In observing schools we have been struck by the great variety of successful teachers, some of whom have quite antithetical styles. An enormous range of styles seem to be effective with low-income youngsters. A model, even implicit, of the ideal teacher encourages teachers into a mold. The emphasis rather should be on each teacher developing a style which fits with her interests, personality and orientation as they relate to the particular students she has at a particular time. To provide confidence for teachers of the low-income it may be necessary to provide some concrete teaching tactics about what can be done in a classroom. The emphasis, however, should be on how the teacher can relate her own abilities and inclinations to the problems. The orientation

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2. For a discussion of different types of dropouts, see S. M. Miller "Dropouts-A Political Problem" in Daniel Schreiber, ed., and S. M. Miller and Ira Harrison, "Types of Dropouts: 'The Unemployables' ", Syracuse University Youth Development Center, 1963

should not be towards specific techniques which are thought to have all-powerful consequences, but upon the uniqueness of teachers and their differentiated abilities. It is important for teachers and training programs to accept the diversity of teachers and to try to develop the kinds of strategy that would be most effective for a teacher, given her personality, interests and aptitudes (although these can be developed and channeled).

In this connection, inadequate attention has been devoted to effective teachers. In every school, no matter what its general character, some teachers are successful with children. We need better <u>understanding</u> of what these effective teachers do. An important research project could be developed around close study of and interviews with such teachers so that it would be possible to develop inductively a scheme of effective teaching processes. We are not referring to the use of clipbooks or other tactics that may be employed by an effective teacher, but to the underlying and frequently implicit <u>strategy</u> that is involved. Frequently, the tactics of effective teachers are picked up and distributed to a wider group of teachers but the teaching strategies which give rise to or utilize these techniques are ignored. The job of research is to sift through tactics, seeing which have transfer value of themselves, and to uncover the basic strategies which could be adapted in many ways by other teachers.

<u>Structural Change</u>

School systems generally have not developed the qualities of flexibility and adaptiveness necessary for the problems of today. The great expansion of education in this century and the unevenness of its quality has led quite naturally to regulations and procedures aimed at maintaining standards and insuring common

practices over a large educational enterprise. At this stage--at least of large city schools--flexibility and experimentation become important.

One strategy is to have the schools operate as do some modern mental hospitals which, once a person has been a patient in them, feel a recurring responsibility to him. He can live in the hospital at night and work in the community; he can utilize the facilities of the hospital during the day and live in the community at night. He can sign himself into and out of the hospital at will--his stays can be short or long. The social service department will provide aid in the community to former patients and their families. The hospital attitude is to help provide what is needed to aid the individual at different points in his life. The general aim is to facilitate the individual's functioning in the larger community by using the hospital in a variety of ways.

The dropout is not a mental patient. But his needs, his recognition of them, his ability and preparedness to do something about them, differ at various points (as do the needs of mental patients and all of us). Schools should be willing, for example, to re-admit at anytime a youth who has left school rather than insisting that September and February are the entry points. Extending counseling and guidance to drop-outs until perhaps these activities might be the continuing responsibility of schools might be important; with the diversification of services and agencies one problem can become "multi-problems" as many agencies become involved. Courses in the early years of high school might be those which particularly interest non-verbally oriented students, and some of the required courses (e.g., English and History) might be concentrated in the later years when motivation or understanding is higher.

These suggestions are illustrative of structural changes in schools which could have ramifying effects. These types of changes have to go hand in hand with the general improvement in teaching youth of low-economic families. The current emphasis seems to be much more on pedagogic innovation and up-grading than on structural innovation. The latter, we feel, has considerable importance.

Large city school systems have, in some ways, more possibility of structural flexibility than smaller systems. Because of the great school population, there is likely to be a sizable number of youth who have common needs at a particular time; consequently, the per capita cost of a program can be less than when only a few youth need "adaptive school arrangements" at a moment of time.

Organizational Style

We have been impressed in observations of schools with the imprint of the principal and/or the superintendent on what takes place. In some schools it seems possible in an half-hour to develop a fairly adequate idea of how the principal operates. For the organizational style affects a great deal of what takes place inside and outside the school building.

Consequently, a major emphasis should be upon encouraging new and deepened outlooks among school principals and superintendents. Our experience in a variety of settings is that training is usually beamed at the foot-soldier: the teacher in the classroom, the social worker in the clinic, the foremen and shop steward in the plant. But much of what these practitioners can do is conditioned by the organizational environment in which they operate. Many come back from training programs imbued with zeal for change and new pursuits only to find an uninterested or negative administration.

Our conlcusion is that training and change at the teacher level is most effective when it is coupled with change at the administrative level.

Frequently, the most important changes are in how the school administration relates to teachers and students.

Changes at the administrative level make possible and encourage possibilities at the teacher level (and in the office and janitorial roles which are frequently overlooked in their impact upon students). Obviously, teachers can do much to improve their teaching without administrative change and the absence of administrative change should not be used as an excuse for individual teachers to avoid rethinking their role. But the crucial importance of organizational form and style has been largely ignored. Retraining cannot be sprinkled through an organization with the expectation of big changes unless the organization as an entity changes.

We suspect that the success of many low-income school projects rests with organizational change rather than in the adoption of specific packages of programs. School administrations demonstrating a heightened interest and belief in the educability of low-income youth are most likely to be able to engender positive action among the students. The importance of the Hawthorne effects, deriving from concern and interest rather than from specific activities, may be underplayed in our understanding and interpretation of successful programs.[3] Programs can be easily copied; concern can not. It is this situation which underlines the importance of administrative orientation and stance.

Some proposed school innovations are techniques; almost all assume or are directed at organizational and classroom climate changes. Evaluation, therefore, should not be mechanically statistical, indicating the planned input and what

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3. Cf. Frank Riessman, The Culturally Deprived Child, pp. 103-104

appears to be the educational output. A clinical view of the organizational process is important and neglected--How does successful introduction of new and effective practices in schools, especially those in slum areas, occur? What are the activities which are most easily changed? What are the important resistances to change? How have they been met? To what extent and in what ways can teachers' behavior be changed without overall organizational change?

Attitudes and Values

What is crucial about organizational style is the climate it creates; what is effective about the suscessful teacher is the attitude she conveys to the students. Tactics, strategy, structure are important; also important are the attitudes and values of the teachers, administrator and auxiliary staff for they affect the atmosphere in which things happen or do not happen.

An interesting example from mental hospitals: Ward attendants were told that patients were now receiving tranquilizers. The attendants later reported that patients were more tractable and much easier to handle. In fact, patients had been given placebos, tablets with no medicinal effects! That patients had not changed; the ward attendants had. They now thought that patients would not be difficult, acted on this basis and found or produced less difficulty. The implication of this incident for school personal is that the attitude of personnel is crucial in what takes place.

Changes in tactics, strategy and structure can founder if the attitudes of school personnel do not change. Confidence and hope that students can develop competences and be interested in school contribute to the achievement of such results. Changed values and attitudes may usually have to be buttressed with new tactics, strategy and structure. But it is important to recognize that value

and attitudes permeate the complex human interactions of schools.

In this connection it is important to avoid placing the responsibility for solutions on the client, the student. A professional takes responsibility upon himself. If his job is to teach and if students have problems limiting their effective response to the classroom, then the professional has to define the problem as how can a professional deal with these difficulties. It may be that the student can be better prepared but the essential thrust is always towards the professional and his responsibility for action to improve the situation.

The use of the term "culturally deprived" raises a number of questions that bear on this problem. The term implies a standard set of items which (a) most Americans have, (b) are desirable in and of themselves and (c) provide the basic reasons for school failure. All three suppositions are doubtful but the most important aspect is that the use of the term puts the burden on the student rather than on the schools' responsibility to deal with children of diverse background or experience.

Schools and Society

The effective school programs in low-income areas seem to involve (1) a direct and a concerted attempt at building the competences of students, especially in reading; (2) changing organizational structure and climate so that students (and parents) develop a more favorable attitude towards school, (3) teachers can work more effectively (reduced class size), and (4) additional school programs can be undertaken (trips out of the neighborhood); (5) the utilization of specialized personnel (counselors, psychologists, teacher helpers) to permit the teacher to concentrate on the teaching relationship and to provide aid to handle special

problems (psychological treatment of disturbed youth); (6) the building of favorable attitudes and behavior among the school personnel to the programs and towards their students; (7) the development through training of the competences of school personnel in dealing with the school problems of low-income youth.

But decreasing the number of dropouts is only one way of dealing with the growing problem of youth and employment--and it may be a very inadequate one if decen jobs are not available in sufficient numbers for high school graduates. In this century many community problems have been thrust upon the schools; it may be important for school personnel to point out constantly the responsibility of the polity generally for the functioning of the economy and for its impact upon youth. Schools cannot solve the problems of slow economic growth, anarchic labor markets and the like. They can serve to improve, to some extent, the quality of labor but the demand for labor would still be a prime problem. The efforts of American schools to improve the prospects of low-income youth can be only one mode af attack on the problems. In each community, schools may have to play the important role of pointing out the varied and extensive programs and actions that are needed.